

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONTEV 02301 151728Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 2301

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SUBJ: RECENT APPOINTMENT OF DR. ALVARO ALVAREZ AS URUGUAYAN
AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS

1. ALVARO ALVAREZ, A LAWYER BY TRAINING WHO HAS SERVED WITH THE URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTRY SINCE 1951, WAS RECENTLY NAMED AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS. HE RECEIVED HIS DOCTORATE IN LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN 1957 AND HAS PRACTICED AND TAUGHT LAW ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY THROUGHOUT HIS DIPLOMATIC CAREER.

2. DURING HIS FIRST TWENTY YEARS WITH THE URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, HE SERVED IN A VARIETY OF POSTS AND ON A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES BUT, SURPRISINGLY, WAS ASSIGNED TO ONLY TWO PERMANENT OVERSEAS DELEGATIONS, CUBA (1963) AND WEST GERMANY/AUSTRIA, WHERE HE WAS CHARGE AD INTERIM (1967-1972). DURING THESE EARLY YEARS HE DEVELOPED AN INTIMATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND EXPERTISE IN SEVERAL DIVERSE FIELDS: LAW OF THE SEA, NAVAL POLICY, FISHING POLICY, AVIATION LAW, INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY, URUGUAYAN/ARGENTINE AFFAIRS AND ALL ISSUES DEALING WITH DIPLOMATIC OR TREATY LAW AND PROTOCOLARY MATTERS. IN 1973-74 HE WAS NAMED SUB-DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S KEY FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AND

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MONTEV 02301 151728Z

SERVED AS URUGUAYAN DELEGATE TO SEVERAL CONFERENCES OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION TO STUDY THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM (LIMA, WASHINGTON, TLATELOLCO), ONCE REPRESENTING URUGUAY AT A MINISTERIAL-LEVEL CONFERENCE. IN 1974 HE ALSO SERVED AS URUGUAY'S DELEGATE TO THE IV GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OASGA) AND WAS APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT (NUMBER THREE MAN IN MIN-

ISTRY), WHICH POST HE HELD UNTIL HIS RECENT APPOINTMENT TO THE NETHERLANDS. IN 1977 HE WAS APPOINTED URUGUAY'S AMBASSADOR TO THE LATIN AMERICAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION (LAFTA) BUT CONTINUED TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY IN HIS MINISTRY POSITION. DURING HIS TENURE AS DIRECTOR HE REPRESENTED URUGUAY BEFORE THE ILO AS WELL AS THE OAS, LAFTA, AND OTHER HEMISPHERIC ORGANIZATIONS, AND HE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE FORMULATION OF URUGUAYAN FOREIGN POLICY. HIS BLISTERING AND VITUPERATIVE DEFENSE OF URUGUAY'S HUMAN RIGHTS POSITION AT THE VII (GRENADA) OASGA IN MARCH 1977 SET A HARSH CONFRONTATIONAL TONE FOR THE GOU'S RESPONSES ON HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALMOST A FULL YEAR.

3. IN ADDITION TO HIS PRIVATE LAW PRACTICE AND DIPLOMATIC DUTIES, ALVAREZ HAS AUTHORED THE FOLLOWING BOOKS: THECONTINENTAL SHELF (DEALING WITH FISHING RIGHTS), INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND THE URUGUAYAN CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM, NEW PRINCIPLES OF THE LAW OF THE SEA AND A BOOK ON URUGUAYAN-ARGENTINE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, THE SALTO GRANDE DAM.

4. ALVAREZ WAS BORN ON JANUARY 24, 1931. HE IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER MARIA LUISA NARI AND THEY HAVE ONE DAUGHTER, MARIA FERNANDA. HE SPEAKS GOOD FRENCH, ENGLISH, ITALIAN AND GERMAN. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S. IS NOT FAVORABLE AT THIS TIME BECAUSE OF USG OPPOSITION TO THE URUGUAYAN HUMAN RIGHTS POSTURE, BECAUSE OF VERBAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN HIM AND USG REPRESENTATIVES (ESPECIALLY IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS) AND BECAUSE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MONTEV 02301 151728Z

HE SUSPECTS THAT USG INFLUENCE CONTRIBUTED AT LEAST INDIRECTLY TO HIS REMOVAL AS CHIEF OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT. HOWEVER, IN SOCIAL CONTACTS WITH USG OFFICIALS HE IS ADEPT AT MASKING THIS ATTITUDE WITH SMILING CONDIALITY.

5. COMMENT: AS DIRECTOR OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT ALVAREZ PLAYED A CENTRAL ROLE IN GOU POLICYMAKING AND IMAGE-MAKING. HE UTILIZED THIS POSITION TO STIFFEN URUGUAY'S BELLIGERENT STANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO ABET AND ENCOURAGE OTHER GOU OFFICIALS TO FOLLOW THE HARD LINE. AS SUCH, FOLLOWING THE GRENANA OASGA, HE ASSUMED THE ROLE OF HATCHET MAN WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AGAINST MODERATE URUGUAYAN FORCES AND BECAME A LEADING PROPONENT OF URUGUAY'S INTRANSIGENT POSITION ABROAD. HIS EXTREMISM IN BOTH STYLE AND SUBSTANCE MADE HIM A SYMBOL OF URUGUAYAN UNCOOPERATIVENESS. CONSEQUENTLY AS THE COUNTRY'S MILITARY LEADERS OPTED FOR A MORE MODERATE APPROACH TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM, HE BECAME AN EMBARRASSMENT. THAT, COUPLED WITH HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE AND RESISTANCE TO CHANGE, SPELLED HIS DEMISE, WHICH WAS WIDELY TAKEN AS A HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT BY THIS EMBASSY AND MODERATES IN URUGUAY.

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